/335 cont./

#171 846 [262] Everything else would be harmful for the child: it would be exactly as though the child itself were eating meat, fish, or fruit.

Now nothing is more obvious than to connect the remarkable custom, which is beneficial to the women, wih the hunting life; the man should stay near the wife and child during the difficult hours and the first days and should not roam about outside; there was no better means for this than to put him on a diet. And, no matter how the custom originated, it is clear that it afforded this advantage, and it is at least quite understandable that the women were in favor of it, and it became firmly established.

● [183] On the modern Paranatinga, however, where i is being neglected, the women are discontented, not because theysuffer under it, but because the children do. Even though it benefited the women, that is no reason why the men would have submitted to it. And yet the men do submit to it so generally and with such conviction that one realizes that a deeply rooted, ancient element of popular belief is involved. It is very doubtful whethe there is any Indian tribe in Brazil which has not practiced it. One must, if possible, investigate the institution among tribes that were found in undisturbed conditions and have not simply preserved the remnants of old institutions. The Island Karaiben /Island Carib/ usually did not eat or drink anything during the first five days, limited themselves in the following four to a drink made out of cooked mandioca, and then ate more abundantly, but abstained from a few kinds of meat for several months more. It is not likely," says the excellent Father Breton, "that the huband also screams like the wife in labor; on the contrary, I sawthem coming from outside secretively and in a furtive manner one month after the birth, in order to keep their fast in seclusion." They are contemptuous of those who do not observe the custom; they say they feel better doing it and grow older, and they believe that if they omit the custom their illnesses caused by superfluous juices would be passed on to their children.